1. (Currently Amended) A method of attempting to build credentials for a user of a device connected to a network, the method comprising:

providing, to a first credential builder included in a first device connected to the network, a first credential descriptor that describes a plurality of credentials;

configuring the first credential builder based on the first credential descriptor to build at least one of the credentials described by the first credential descriptor;

using the first credential builder to attempt to build the at least one ~~of the credentials~~ credential described by the first credential descriptor;

~~providing~~ sending a second credential descriptor that describes at least one credential described in the first credential descriptor, but not built by the first credential builder from the first credential builder to a second credential builder included in a second device connected to the network; ~~and~~

configuring the second credential builder based on the second credential descriptor to build at least one of the credentials described by the second credential descriptor; and

using the second credential builder to attempt to build the at least one credential described by the second credential descriptor ~~provided to the second credential builder~~.

2. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further including:

providing the credentials built using the first and second credential builders to a credential evaluator included in the first device or the second device; and

evaluating the built credentials by using the credential evaluator to determine whether the built credentials satisfy the first credential descriptor for the device.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further including:

providing the credentials built using the first and second credential builders to a credential evaluator included in a device connected to the network that is different from the first and second devices; and

evaluating the built credentials by using the credential evaluator to determine whether the built credentials satisfy the first credential descriptor for the device.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further including:

~~providing~~ sending a third credential descriptor that describes at least one credential not built in the second building step from the second credential builder to the first credential builder; and

attempting to build credentials corresponding thereto by using the first credential builder.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further including:

~~providing~~ sending a third credential descriptor that describes at least one credential not built by using either the first or the second credential builder from the second credential builder to a third credential builder included in a device connected to the network that is different from the first and second devices; and

using the third credential builder to attempt to build at least one credential described by the third credential descriptor ~~provided to the third credential builder~~.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 further including generating the first credential descriptor for the device.

7-10 (Canceled).

11. (Currently Amended) A method of attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising

providing a master credential descriptor including at least one credential descriptor to a master credential builder that includes a plurality of credential builders, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of ~~zero or more~~ credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building,

the credential builders being dynamically selected based on credential descriptors in the master credential descriptor and being linked in a series based on credential descriptors in the master credential descriptor in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder; and

employing the master credential builder to attempt to build at least one credential described by the master credential descriptor.

12. (Previously Presented ) The method of claim 11 wherein, if the master credential builder has built credentials as a result of having attempted to build credentials, the method further includes:

providing the credentials built by using the master credential builder to a master credential evaluator that includes a plurality of credential evaluators for evaluating a corresponding plurality of different types of credentials for the device; and

using the master credential evaluator to evaluate the credentials provided thereto to determine whether those credentials satisfy the credential descriptor for the device.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 11 further including generating the credential descriptor for the device.

14-16 (Canceled).

17. (Currently Amended) A method of attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising:

providing a master credential descriptor including at least one credential descriptor to a master credential builder, the master credential builder including at least one credential builder that:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of ~~zero or more~~ credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building;

dynamically adding at least one different credential builder to the master credential builder based on credential descriptors in the master credential descriptor to form a modified master credential builder in such a manner that the credential builders are so linked in a series that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder; and

using the modified master credential builder to attempt to build credentials corresponding to at least one of the plurality of credential descriptors.

18. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 17 further including:

providing the credentials built by the modified master credential builder to a master credential evaluator;

forming a modified master credential evaluator by adding to the master credential evaluator different credential evaluators corresponding to at least a portion of the credentials provided in the master credential descriptor to the master credential evaluator; and

evaluating the credentials corresponding to at least one of the credential evaluators by using the modified master credential evaluator.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 18 further including removing credential evaluators that do not correspond to at least one of the credentials from the master credential evaluator.

20. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 17 further including generating the credential descriptor for the device.

21. (Currently Amended) A method of attempting to build credentials for a user of a device, the method comprising:

providing a master credential descriptor including at least one credential descriptor to a master credential builder, the master credential builder including a plurality of credential builders, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of ~~zero or more~~ credentials and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be built;

C) attempts to build a given credential described by the credential builder if the given credential is of the credential type associated with that credential builder; and

D) generates an output that includes:

i) an output set of credentials that includes the input set of credentials as well as any credential that that credential builder has been successful in building; and

ii) an output credential descriptor that describes each credential described by the input credential descriptor that that credential builder has not been successful in building,

the credential builders being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential builder but the first credential builder in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential builder;

dynamically removing at least one of the credential builders from the master credential builder based on the credential descriptors in the master credential descriptor to form a modified master credential builder; and

using the modified master credential builder to attempt to build credentials corresponding to at least one of the credentials described by the credential descriptor.

22-30. (Canceled)

31. (Currently Amended) ~~Apparatus~~ An apparatus used to attempt to build credentials for a user of a device connected to a network, comprising:

means for generating for the device a first credential descriptor that describes a plurality of credentials;

means for providing the first credential descriptor to a first credential builder;

means for configuring the first credential builder based on the first credential descriptor to build at least one of the credentials described by the first credential descriptor;

means for using the first credential builder to build the at least ~~one of the credentials~~ credential described by the first credential descriptor;

means for ~~providing~~ sending to a second credential builder a second credential descriptor that describes at least one credential described in the first credential descriptor, but not built ~~in the first building step~~ by the first credential builder; ~~and~~

means for configuring the second credential builder based on the second credential descriptor to build at least one of the credentials described by the second credential descriptor; and

means for using the second credential builder to build at the least one credential described by the second credential descriptor ~~provided to the second credential builder~~;

wherein the first credential builder and the second credential builder are included in different devices connected to the network.

32. (Currently Amended) A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising:

providing a master credential descriptor and a plurality of credentials for the device to a master credential evaluator including a plurality of credential evaluators, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator,

the credential evaluators <u>being dynamically selected based on the master credential descriptor and</u> being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator; and

evaluating the plurality of credentials by using the master credential evaluator to determine whether the plurality of credentials satisfies the master credential descriptor.

33. (Currently Amended) A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising the steps of:

providing a master credential descriptor and a plurality of credentials for the device to a master credential evaluator including at least one credential evaluator, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator;

forming a modified credential evaluator by dynamically adding at least one credential evaluator to the master credential evaluator based on the master credential descriptor in such a manner that the credential evaluators are so linked in a series that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator; and

evaluating at least one of the credentials by using the modified master credential evaluator to determine whether the at least one credential satisfies the master credential descriptor.

34. (Currently Amended) A method of evaluating credentials for a user of a device, comprising the steps of:

providing a master credential descriptor and a plurality of credentials for the device to a master credential evaluator including a plurality of credential evaluators, each of which:

A) is associated with a respective credential type;

B) takes an input that includes an input set of at least one credential and an input credential descriptor that describes at least one credential to be evaluated;

C) attempts to evaluate a given credential in the input set if the given credential is described by the credential descriptor and is of the credential type associated with that credential evaluator; and

D) generates an output that includes the input set of credentials and an output credential descriptor that describes each credential that is described by the input credential descriptor but has not successfully been evaluated by that credential evaluator,

the credential evaluators being linked in a series in such a manner that the input credential descriptor and set of credentials of each credential evaluator but the first credential evaluator in the series include the output credential descriptor and set of credentials of the preceding credential evaluator;

dynamically removing at least one of the credential evaluators from the master credential evaluator based on the master credential descriptor to form a modified master credential evaluator; and

evaluating at least one of the credentials by using the modified master credential evaluator to determine whether the at least one credential satisfies the master credential descriptor.

35. (Canceled).